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Ministry of Advanced Education

PROVINCE CONTINUES IMPROVEMENTS TO EDUCATION QUALITY

VICTORIA – Government is putting into action a number of changes to further strengthen quality, accountability, opportunities and protection for students in post-secondary education in British Columbia, Advanced Education Minister Murray Coell announced today.

"Our number one priority is ensuring B.C. students receive the highest quality post-secondary experience possible," said Coell. "Critical to that goal is providing a way for students to look at an institution and be able to readily determine the quality of the program and the school."

Coell announced the development of an Education Quality Assurance (EQA) designation that will become British Columbia's brand for post-secondary education for both public and private institutions. The EQA will be used around the world to promote high quality, reputable and credible B.C. post-secondary institutions, and will enable students to readily see which institutions, both public and private, are "recognized" as having met established quality assurance standards.

Additional actions include:

- Moving to a results-based accreditation process that holds private institutions accountable for the extent to which students achieve stated program outcomes. For example, a school may choose to measure its results based on how many students obtain jobs after completing a program. That school would be required to publicly report on employment rates of its students as a condition of its accreditation. Students will be able to make better informed choices about career training.
- Enhancing accountability of the Private Career Training Institutions Agency. Periodic reviews, surveys, and increased public reporting requirements will increase transparency and give the public more opportunities to provide constructive feedback and advice to PCTIA. This will help the agency better respond to changing needs of students and schools.
- Restructuring PCTIA fee structures. Changes are being made to level the playing field between small and large institutions. Institutions that have a history of non-compliance will face increased fees. These changes will increase fairness and accountability between institutions.

"The initiatives announced today build on this government's commitment to enhancing all aspects of post-secondary education, so that students from around the world can have confidence that when they come to B.C. they will receive a quality education," said Coell. "We will be working closely with our education partners to implement EQA."

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The Campus 2020 initiative was the first comprehensive look at higher education in British Columbia in 45 years. The spring 2007 report, which followed provincewide consultation, contained recommendations that will help shape B.C.'s learning landscape as it moves towards 2020. A review of the Private Career Training Institutions Act was recommended in the Campus 2020 report. Both the reports are available online at: www.aved.gov.bc.ca/publications.

British Columbia's private career training institutions attract a large and diverse population of students with more than 65,000 enrolments and about $265 million total tuition paid to just under 500 private institutions.

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